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Nursing

NURSING SERVICES

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(Lt Col Kerrie G. Lindberg)
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This directive establishes policies that Air Force Nursing Services will use to ensure the highest standards of nursing practice and care are applied to all aspects of nursing care provided to eligible beneficiaries. This directive applies to all active duty Air Force, Air Force Reserve, and Air National Guard component medical units when and where nursing care activities are performed.

SUMMARY OF REVISIONS

This document has been substantially revised due to the recent evolution in the healthcare delivery system. Roles and responsibilities within Nursing Services have been clearly identified and defined.

1. Nursing Services is integral to the collaborative Air Force Medical Service (AFMS) goals of achieving population health and force protection, and in maintaining a fit fighting force. Nursing personnel provide care in Medical Treatment Facilities (MTFs), communities, deployed locations, theaters of operation, and/or the aeromedical environment.

2. The AFMS, through Air Force Nursing Services, will establish and evaluate policies and programs that address nursing service management, career development, education and training, standards of care and practice, utilization, and the integration of nursing in medical readiness, operational support, and population health.

3. Definitions:

3.1. Nursing: "The diagnosis and treatment of human responses to actual or potential health problems" (American Nurses Association, ANA). "The health profession dealing with nursing care and services as defined in relevant state, commonwealth, or territory nurse practice acts and other applicable laws and regulations, and as permitted by a health care organization in accordance with these definitions" (Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations, JCAHO).

3.2. Nursing Care: "Professional processes intended to assist an individual in the performance of those activities contributing to health or its recovery (or to peaceful death) that he or she would per-

form unaided if he or she had the necessary strength, will, or knowledge. This includes, but is not limited to, assisting individuals (to) carry out therapeutic plans and understanding the health needs of individuals. The special content of nursing care varies in different countries and situations, and, as defined, it is not given solely by registered nurses, but also by other health care professionals” (JCAHO).

3.3. Nursing Services: “The structure through which services are provided by registered nurses and other personnel under the direction of a nurse administrator within the scope of nursing practice and in accordance with state law” (ANA). “The primary goal of organized Nursing Services is the delivery of quality, compassionate, culturally competent, cost-effective, and efficient nursing care to individuals, families, groups, and communities within the dynamic health care environment” (ANA). “Services provided to patients by an individual who is qualified by an approved postsecondary program or baccalaureate or higher degree in nursing and who is licensed or certified by the state to practice nursing. These services may be provided directly or through contract with another organization or individual” (JCAHO). Nursing Service personnel are comprised of Advanced Practice Nurses (Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists, Nurse Practitioners, Midwives), registered nurses, licensed vocational/practical nurses, medical service technicians, and unlicensed assistive personnel. They provide quality nursing care within their scope of practice and level of competency.

3.4. Standards of Nursing Care: “Authoritative statements that describe a competent level of clinical nursing practice demonstrated through assessment, diagnosis, outcome identification, planning, implementation, and evaluation” (ANA).

3.5. Standards of Nursing Practice: “Authoritative statements that describe a level of care or performance common to the profession of nursing by which the quality of nursing practice can be judged. Standards of clinical nursing practice include both standards of care and standards of professional performance” (ANA).

3.6. Standards of Professional Performance: “Authoritative statements that describe a competent level of behavior in the professional role, including activities related to quality of care, performance appraisal, education, collegiality, ethics, collaboration, research, and resource utilization” (ANA).

4. This directive establishes the following responsibilities and authorities.

4.1. The Director of Nursing Services, Office of the Surgeon General, is the Chief of the Air Force Nurse Corps and is directly responsible to the Air Force Surgeon General for establishing and evaluating nursing policies and programs. This position is established by Title 10, United States Code, Section 8069.

4.2. The Deputy Director of Nursing Services, Office of the Surgeon General, is the Assistant Chief of the Air Force Nurse Corps and is directly responsible to the Director of Nursing Services for the day-to-day operations of nursing services Air Force-wide. This position is also established by Title 10, United States Code, Section 8069.

4.3. The Career Field Manager is directly responsible to the Director of Nursing Services for establishing and evaluating enlisted policies and programs within nursing career fields.

4.4. The Major Command (MAJCOM) Nurse is responsible to the MAJCOM Surgeon and clarifies, supports, interprets, and oversees nursing policy and instructions within the command.

4.5. The Command Medical Service Manager is responsible to the MAJCOM Nurse and clarifies, supports, interprets, and oversees enlisted nursing functions and manning issues within the command.

4.6. The Chief Nurse (CN) of a MTF is responsible to the MTF Commander and has authority, responsibility and accountability for all aspects of nursing care and practice within that facility. The CN approves all nursing policies and procedures, nursing standards of patient care, and standards of nursing practice within the MTF. The CN participates with the executive staff in planning, promoting, and conducting organization-wide performance-improvement activities. The MTF CN is responsible for ensuring the competency of nursing personnel and that nursing personnel practice to the full extent allowed within their defined scope. The CN will ensure the medical service technicians practice to the maximum scope of care as outlined in the Career Field Enlisted Training Plan (CFETP).

4.7. The MTF Senior 4N0XX has authority, responsibility, and accountability, in collaboration with the CN, for managing all medical service technicians within the MTF. The Senior 4N0XX collaborates with the CN in determining medical service technician assignments within the facility and when necessary, with the squadron superintendent (if not a 4N0XX). The Senior 4N0XX ensures the medical service technicians practice to the maximum scope of care as outlined in the Career Field Enlisted Training Plan (CFETP).and is the functional advisor for all career field educational and training requirements.

5. Air Force Nursing Services expects compliance with professional ethics and nursing standards of practice and care. This includes but is not limited to: national professional nursing organizations, state practice acts, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, the Centers for Disease Control, JCAHO, and other appropriate federal, national, and state agencies.

6. See [attachment 1](#) for a list of references pertaining to this policy directive and a list of relevant Acronyms and Abbreviations.

F. WHITTEN PETERS
Secretary of the Air Force

Attachment 1**GLOSSARY OF REFERENCES AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION*****References***

AFI 46-101, *Nursing Operations*, Current Edition

Comprehensive Accreditation Manual for Hospitals (Joint Commission on the Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations), Current Edition

Comprehensive Accreditation Manual for Ambulatory Care (Joint Commission on the Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations), Current Edition

Title 10 U.S.C. Armed Forces, Section 8069, Current Edition

American Nurses Association, *Nursing Standards*, Current Edition

Abbreviations and Acronyms

AFMS—Air Force Medical Service

ANA—American Nurses Association

CN—Chief Nurse

CFETP—Career Field Education Training Plan

JCAHO—Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations

MAJCOM—Major Command

MTF—Medical Treatment Facility